

Food subsidy

†1078. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the amount of food subsidy was fixed at 24,000 crore rupees for 2006-07;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that the said amount of subsidy is likely to increase as wheat is being imported into the country; and

(d) if so, the assessment made with regard to the quantum of amount expected to be increased?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) As per Budget Estimates (2006-07) an amount of Rs. 23,986.21 crore has been allocated for food subsidy.

(c) and (d) Import of 55 lakh tonnes of wheat at a weighted average price of US \$ 205.31 per tonne has been undertaken to meet the shortfall in domestic wheat procurement as part of MSP operations. The imported purchase prices are broadly comparable to the domestic open market wheat prices and is likely to entail an additional subsidy of about Rs. 775 crore.

Corruption in PDS

†1079. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is rampant corruption in centrally-funded programmes especially in the Public Distribution System in absence of proper monitoring mechanism;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that the main reason behind a starvation death in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh last month was malfunction in the Public Distribution System;

(c) if so, whether Government are taking any action in this regard;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government would contemplate on conducting an enquiry by any agency into the Public Distribution System, especially rampant corruption in distribution of Antyodaya cards; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) caters to partial foodgrain requirement of 11.52 crore Above Poverty Line (APL), 4.02 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) and 2.50 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. The Central and the State Government work in close co-ordination in this behalf. At present about 4.89 lakh Fair Price Shops distribute foodgrains to 22.23 crore ration card holders in the country. In such a vast network of the PDS, the possibilities of irregularities in some cases/places cannot be ruled out. Whenever Government receives complaints in this respect, these have been forwarded to the concerned State Governments/UTs for appropriate action. The State Governments/UT Administrations have also been directed to make the TPDS effective and to ensure that foodgrains reach the targeted population.

For continuous monitoring of the Public Distribution System (PDS), Government of India monitors on monthly basis the allocation and offtake of foodgrains made to the State Governments under the TPDS. To ensure correct distribution of foodgrains, the State Governments are also submitting information in Form "C" as required under the PDS (Control) Order. At the State level, monitoring of PDS is being done by the respective State Governments through a system of continuous inspections of Fair Price Shops (FPS) to ensure that there are no leakages/diversions under the TPDS. Instructions have been issued by the Government of India to set up Vigilance Committees at the Fair Price Shop/Block/District and State Levels to continuously monitor the distribution of foodgrains under the PDS. Government of India has also been holding National/Regional Level Conferences with the State Food Ministers and Food Secretaries to ensure smooth working of the PDS.

(b) State Government has reported that no starvation death has taken place in District Gorakhpur.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

(e) and (f) As per point (2) of the Annexure to the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, State Governments shall get the lists of BPL and Antyodaya families reviewed every year for the purpose of deletion of ineligible families and inclusion of eligible families. The State Government of Uttar Pradesh itself launched campaign to cancel ghost and improper cards by its order number 422/29-6-06-258sa/03 dated 3.2.2005, and 317538 of BPL and 91862 of AAY cards were cancelled in that drive.

Revival of Super Bazar

1080. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to revive the Super Bazar, in collaboration with a private party;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when a final decision in the matter is likely to be taken; and

(c) whether the employees of the disbanded Super Bazar, who were rendered jobless as a result thereof, would be offered employment in the revived Super Bazar, if so, to what extent and on what terms of services, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The Super Bazar Dalit Karamchari Sangh has filed Special Leave Petition No. 8398/2005 in the Supreme Court challenging the order of winding up of Super Bazar. The Supreme Court in its Order dated 28.2.2006, *inter alia*, observed that professional management of the Super Bazar is absolutely essential. With a view to explore the possibility of having an arrangement under which the management of the Super Bazar may be entrusted to a body of professionals, the Supreme Court constituted a Committee of Officials to consider all aspects of the matter. The Committee submitted its report on 29.03.2006 in the Supreme Court of India. On 5.5.2006, the Supreme